



SECTION IV -- HISTORICAL -- The Nature

PAMPHLET

Incl. Newland House

Historical research may be conducted on several levels. In this study, the emphasis was on actual physical properties. In order to provide a general framework within which to select properties for evaluation, the city's past was divided into general developmental phases. These phases should not be thought of as static periods. There is considerable overlap as demonstrated by the current occupation of two of the dwellings dating from two different, earlier phases. Rather, these general phases should be considered as representative of the predominant life styles of earlier periods.

The city has experienced five general development phases:

1. The Spanish/Mexican Rancho Period. Locally, this period spanned from 1784 to 1849.
2. Early Statehood - Grazing and Agriculture. For the purpose of this discussion the phase extended from 1850 to 1900.
3. Circa 1900 Agricultural Period. While this life style was practiced earlier and is still practiced locally, the hey-day, generally speaking, was from 1900-1920.
4. Oil Boom Period. This period is discussed only briefly; under this report's evaluation criteria, only properties

Ahlering, Micheal H.; Report of a Scientific Survey and Inventory: Conducted for the City of Huntington Beach, California; Archeological Research, Inc.; 1973 pp. 33-43

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more than 50 years old will be discussed (1919 - 1922).

5. Urban Expansion Period. Not discussed because this period started about 1959.

A. EVALUATION CRITERIA

One property was selected from each phase and generally evaluated according to criteria established under the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Criteria for Evaluation

The following criteria are designed to guide the States and the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating potential entries (other than areas of the National Park System and National Historic Landmarks) to the National Register:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- (A) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (B) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (C) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period,

- or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (D) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they fall within the following categories:

- (A) a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- (B) a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- (C) a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or

- (D) a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- (E) a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- (F) a property primarily commemorative in intent of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- (G) a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it of exceptional importance.

B. HISTORICAL PHASES -- EVALUATIONS

1. The Spanish Rancho Period

What is now Huntington Beach first came under European control as a portion of 200,000 acre grant from the Spanish Governor of California, Pedro Fages, to Jose Manuel Nieto in or around 1784. This rancho was called Rancho La Zanja. Nieto's second son, Jose Antonio, married Catarina Ruiz in 1805 and took up residence in the area known as Rancho Las Bolsas. The ranch remained in the hands of his heirs until 1861 when it was purchased by Abel Stearns. The house associated with this early occupation is called the Morillo Adobe. While it is known that it stood on the western side of the Huntington Beach Mesa near

Slater Avenue, its exact location and fate is uncertain.

One possible site of this adobe was located in the course of the survey and research of the area. No positive identification has been made, but several strong lines of indirect evidence suggest that if any trace of this occupation remains, it is in the vicinity of Gothard Street and Slater Avenue to the west of the Standard Oil tank farm, within the boundaries of the new city park. Further research should be conducted toward location of this significant area. It is reasonable to believe that the occupation remains would reflect four significant periods:

- 1) initial European contact with the local Indians;
- 2) Spanish Rancho adaptation to the area;
- 3) the development of the Mexican nation in Alta, California;
- and 4) the transition of the area to the time of the admittance of California to the United States.

The occupation would also reflect the continuous occupation by a single related family, not often encountered in the area.

The smaller Rancho La Bolsa Chica was partitioned from Las Bolsas in 1842 and was granted to Joaquin Ruiz only to be acquired by Abel Stearns around 1858. The short duration of occupation greatly lessens its historic significance.

2. Early Statehood -- Grazing and Agriculture

After Las Bolsas was purchased by Stearns, grazing of cattle and sheep continued. In 1865, after a two year drought, Stearns experienced serious financial problems. With the aid of monetary backing from San Francisco, the Stearns Rancho Company was formed for the purpose of subdividing and selling off the 200 square miles held by Stearns. The Rancho Company outlived Stearns who died in 1871. The last sale of the Rancho Company was the Huntington Beach Mesa to Colonel Bob Northam, who was also the last manager of the company. Northam used the house to conduct the Rancho Company's business and later his own. In 1901 Northam in turn sold most of his holdings to a land syndicate headed by P. A. Stanton, who laid out the townsite then called Pacific Beach.

It is thought that the present house of Colonel Northam might reflect a local era of ranching and farming of a large tract by a single land owner at the turn of the century.

Evaluation of Northam House: The structures and grounds were inspected and the following evaluation was made: The landscaping and grounds do not date to 1900. The structure itself was originally of a rather modest, if not standard, design. Extensive interior modifications and alterations have removed the structure from the condition

of its original historic period. Location and maintenance of the building and grounds make it aesthetically pleasing, but it does not now, nor did it ever, represent any unique, interesting or innovative architectural structure. The house is not an historically significant site worthy of preservation.

3. Circa 1900 Agricultural Period

The next phase in the local history of Huntington Beach is one of small farming activity specializing in vegetable raising. This phase locally is somewhat in variance with the general countywide contemporaneous orchard type of agriculture; this period is one of the more obvious and best remembered phases. A certain amount of agriculture is still practiced today, and vast bean fields on the flood plains of the Santa Ana River are remembered by most citizens. During the early 1900's this activity represented the principal industry of the area, with the Huntington Beach-Fountain Valley farms producing millions of pounds of table vegetables for the cities of San Diego and San Francisco. The most important property which reflects this era is still present in the City at the Newland Ranch and House.

Evaluation of the Newland House: Much of the original feeling of the property is maintained today. Paintings and landscaping largely date to the turn of the century. The structure itself also remains much the

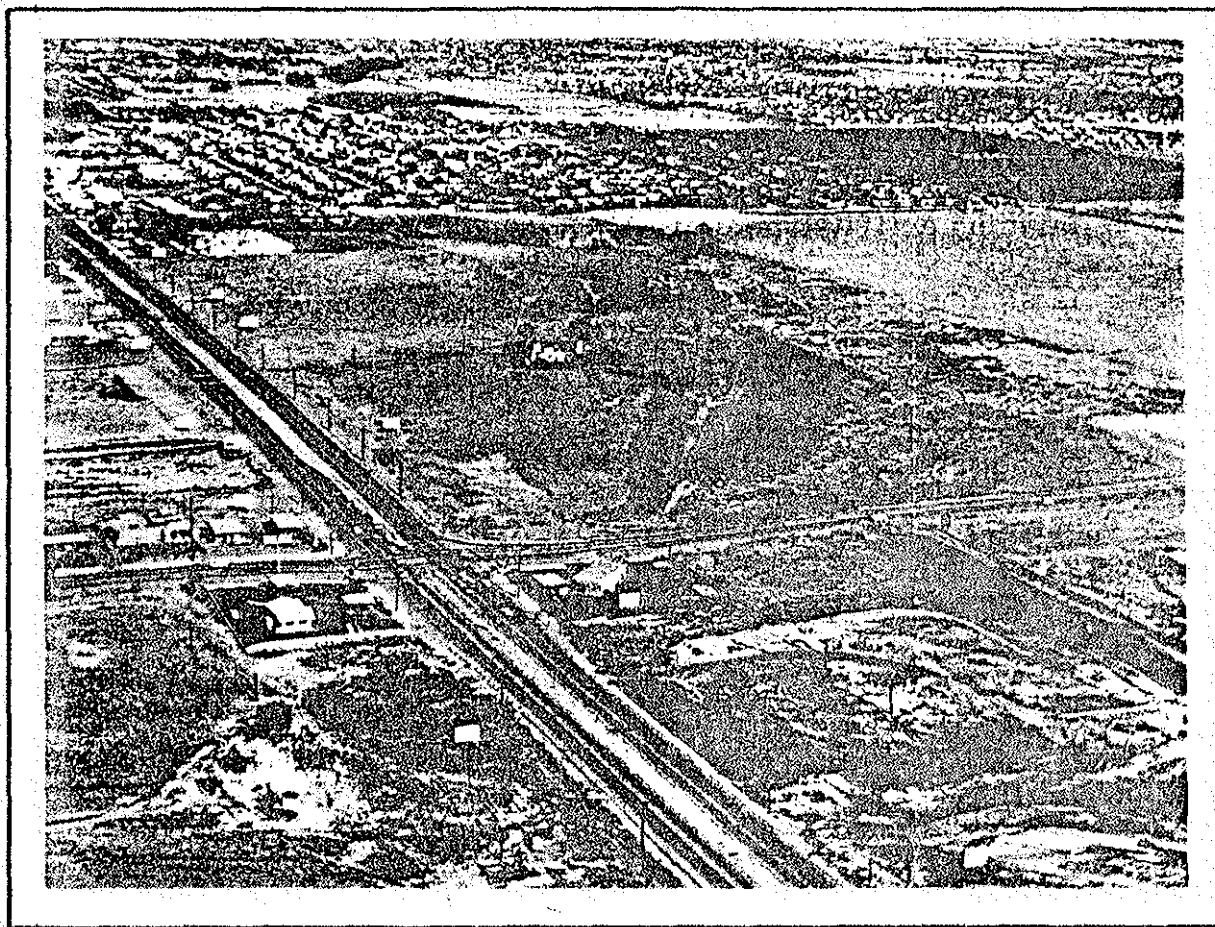


Figure 4: This is an aerial view of the Newland Estate (note the abundant surrounding open areas add to the rural atmosphere).

same as when it was constructed. The architecture is modest and representative of the time.

There is no indication of any unusual or innovative craftsmanship or design. Moderate additions were constructed at different times, but they conformed to the general appearance and feeling of the structure. The significance of the property is based primarily upon the fact that it is the best preserved example of this period within the City of Huntington Beach.

In addition to the building, the property contains an important archaeological deposit and a fresh water marsh of remarkable diversity; in combination the factors make the area valuable and worthy of conservation. Movement of the house or drastic reduction of the surrounding open space or grading of the natural land form may reduce the scientific and historical value of the property.

One other structure worthy of mention (but only in passing) is the remains of the Holly Sugar Factory. Constructed in 1911, it was at the time the most modern factory of its type in the United States. This plant produced 750 tons of sugar per day and employed several hundred workers. The machinery was moved to Torrington, Wyoming, in about 1926. Most of the buildings have since been razed. A similar vintage plant is still in operation in Santa Ana.

4. The Oil Boom

In 1919 the Standard Oil Company acquired a 500 acre lease in the vicinity of Reservoir Hill and began exploratory drilling. The first well, Huntington Beach #1, began production in 1920, yielding 100 barrels per day. A few months later Bolsa Chica #1 came in with a roar that could be heard for miles around! Initially it was reported to be producing 20,000 barrels a day.

The site of Bolsa Chica #1 today is nothing but a vacant pad cut into the Western bluff of the Huntington Beach Mesa. Huntington Beach #1 is marked by a plaque and some vintage equipment is still present.

C. PROGRAM

Some consideration should be given to the Newland House and Ranch area. The house itself could be relocated. If the house is removed, every attempt should be made to move the attendant shrubs and trees.

Further research could be directed towards locating the Morillo Adobe and to record the oral tradition of the area.

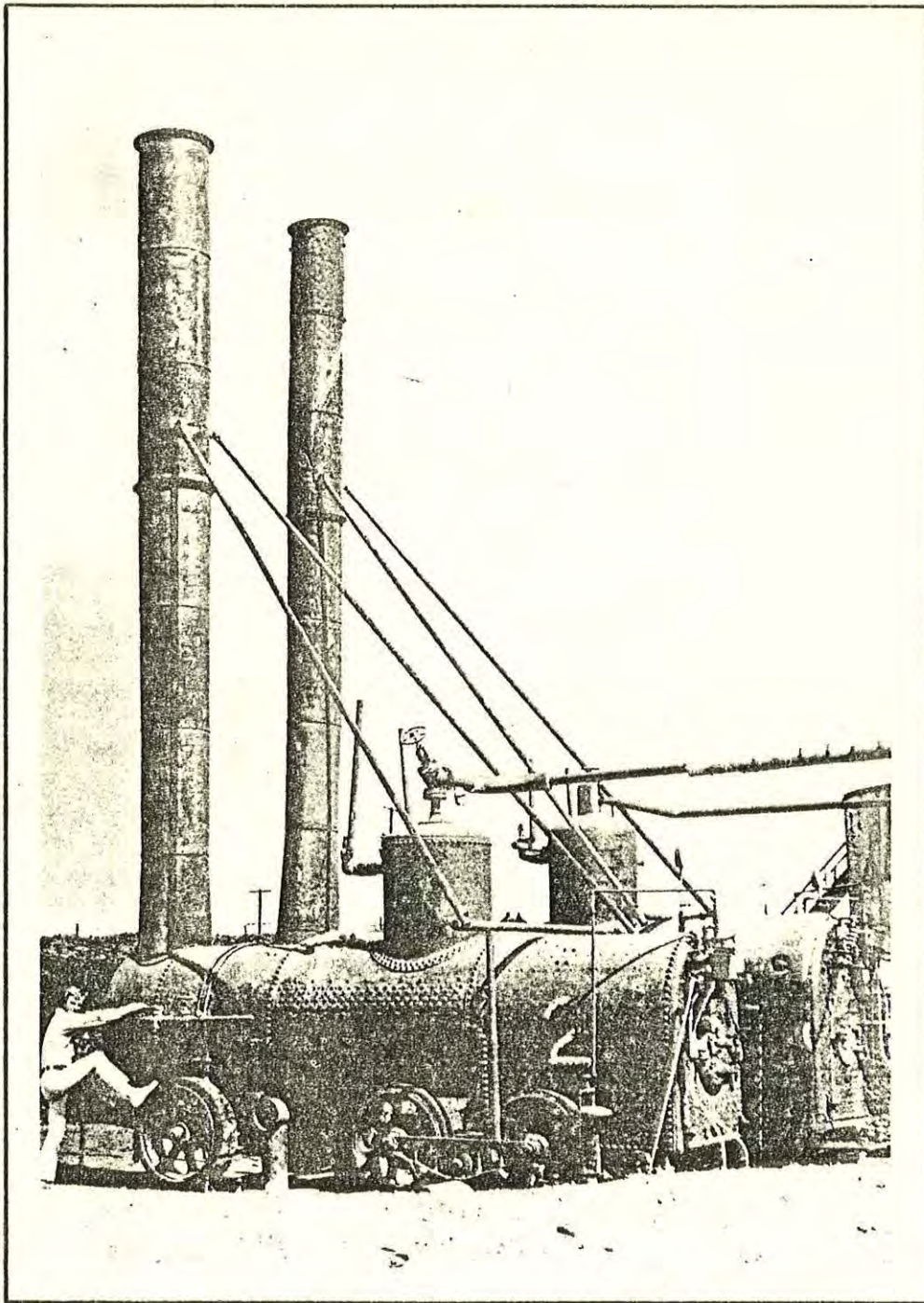


Figure 5: Antique equipment that is located near Huntington Number I.